

Volunteer Grants Panelist Job Summary

Grant Cycle 2019–2020

Serving as a Panelist

Each year, the Arts Council of Fort Worth enlists the aid of individuals from the North Texas community to serve as volunteer grant reviewers. Volunteer panelists play a crucial role in the grant making process by ensuring that grants are distributed to programs and organizations that are most worthy, impactful, and relevant to our community. Individuals can either apply, be nominated, or be invited directly by Arts Council staff to serve as a panelist.

The Grants Panelist role is a serious yet fulfilling commitment that has far reaching effects. Generous funding for the Arts Council grants comes from the City of Fort Worth, Tarrant County, corporate donors, foundations, and local individuals. As such, Grants Panelists' primary job is to be a good stewards of these funds and see that they are used wisely. In doing so, Grants Panelists advance the Arts Council's mission to create an environment that promotes, nurtures, and supports the arts in our community.

Panel Composition

The Arts Council supports the artistic community through two major grant types: Operating Support and GO! Arts Program Support. Applications for support are reviewed by individual panels consisting of 5-7 volunteer grant reviewers from the North Texas community, of various arts related backgrounds and expertise.

Individuals with professional experience in arts administration and/or performance are welcome to apply for a panelist position. Individuals that serve arts organizations, such as those with legal, marketing or financial backgrounds are also encouraged to apply. All panelists must be able to evaluate applications with a critical, objective eye and have an ability to commit to the workload involved. A passion for the arts is critical.

2019/2020 Grants Panel Divisions:

- Wednesday, September 25: Panel 1 – Operating Support, Level I
- Thursday, September 26: Panel 2 – Operating Support, Level II
- Friday, September 27: Panel 3 – GO! Arts Program Support

Panel placement is decided based on expertise, diversity, panelist preference, and conflicts of interest within each panel. Panel assignments are finalized upon the receipt of all grant applications in August.

Commitment

Panelists can expect to spend between 20-30 hours fulfilling their duties as a volunteer reviewers, over the course of 2 months. Total time spent fulfilling program duties is variable, based on the items listed below:

- Panelist Orientation – Webinar in July/August. Duration is approximately 1 hour.
- Online Application Review – The number of applications for each grant pool varies from year to year, however panelists can expect to review on average 15 applications total, serving as primary reviewer on approximately 3 applications. Review time varies, however panelists should anticipate spending approximately 1 hour reviewing each application.

- Grants Panel Review Session – Review session held onsite at the Arts Council offices in late September. Duration is approximately 5 hours.

2019/2020 Grants Panel Review Sessions will be September 25–27 and typically last from 8:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. All panelists serve single year terms. However, panelists may serve multiple years in a row, as invited back by Arts Council staff.

Pre-Review Session

Once applications are submitted in the summer, you will be given access to the online grants portal where you are instructed to review individual applications prior to the review sessions. On average, each panel is responsible for reviewing approximately 15 applications. Individual panelists are responsible for providing an in-depth evaluation of select applications as a “primary” and “secondary” reviewer. These assignments ensure that each organization’s application receives a fair amount of attention within their grant pool. While each panelist is personally responsible for their assigned applications, panelists are expected to have briefly reviewed all applications in their grant pool.

Review Session

Prior to the review discussions, panelists complete Conflict of Interest disclosures and are reminded of the goals and objectives of their role as volunteer reviewers. All efforts are made to seat panelists who do not have any conflict of interest within the panels. In the case that a conflict of interest is revealed on the day of the review, the panelist in question is required to remove themselves from the discussion during review of that application and will not be allowed to score that application.

During the grant review sessions in September, each panel convenes as a group to discuss and evaluate applications based on artistic merit, capability, and impact. During the review, questions, concerns and accolades are voiced and discussed among the panel. After each application is discussed, panel members assign a score to the application, based on the merits outlined. The number of applications reviewed by each panel is based solely on the number of applicants within each grant pool in the given year.

Once all applications are reviewed, scores are averaged, ranked and methodically assigned an award based on a predetermined matrix. Awards recommendations presented to the Arts Council Board of Directors for final approval. Awards letters and first checks are distributed to grant recipients in November.

How do I get involved?

As mentioned above, individuals can either nominate themselves or a peer to serve as a Grants Panelist. The nomination process is as follows:

1. Complete the Grants Panelist Nomination form, which is available on the Arts Council website at <http://www.artsfortworth.org/grants/panelists/>.
2. Contact Grants Program staff at (817) 298-3037 or grants@artscouncilfw.org with any questions you may have about serving on a Grants Panel.
3. Await approval of your nomination. If your nomination is approved, you or your nominee will be contacted by Arts Council staff and sent more information on the Grants Program, the review process, and service timeline. Please note that nomination or submission of an application does not guarantee a position as a volunteer reviewer.

Thank you for your interest in supporting our artistic community through your service!